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FEB 1 2 2004

In re PATENT APPLICATION of

ESCH ET AL.

Application Serial No.: 08/870,591

Group Art Unit: 1754

Examiner: HENDRICKSON,

Filed: June 6, 1997

Title: PRECIPITATED SILICA

February 12, 2004

## PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §1.115

Mail Stop NON-FEE AMENDMENT Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Prior to the examination of the pending claims on the merits and further to the applicants' response filed on October 7, 2003, along with the request for continued examination (RCE), the applicants respectfully consideration of the following amendments and remarks.